

**MARYLAND GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON  
ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN AFFAIRS**

**Meeting Minutes**

Date: Tuesday, January 13, 2009

Time: 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Place: Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland

Present: Chair Jane Nishida, Anis Ahmed, Shukoor Ahmed, Katherine Chin, Kwang Choi, George Dang, Dr. Suresh Gupta, Maria Hrabinski, Dr. Martin Ma, David Pak, Tammy Pantages, Shailesh Patel, Lily Qi, Dr. Amjad Riar, Dr. Nayan Shah, Dr. Sovan Tun, Beth Wong, Kui Zhao

Absent: Vice Chair Bruce Lee, Elizabeth Chung, Dr. Kamala Edwards

Staff Present: David Lee, Agnes M. Smith

Guest Speakers:  
House Majority Leader Kumar Barve  
Delegate Susan Lee  
Jane Traynham, Maryland Department of Planning  
Franklin Jackson, Jr., U.S. Census Bureau  
Dr. Amitabha Das, U.S. Census Bureau

**I. Welcome and Guest Speakers**

Chair Jane Nishida opened the meeting and wished everyone a Happy New Year. Chair Nishida informed the Commissioners that the 2009 General Assembly session starts tomorrow and that they have a difficult challenge facing them with the \$1.9 billion budget deficiency that would affect the citizens and programs of Maryland. Chair Nishida also thanked the Commissioners that attended the Joint Commission Assembly on December 9, 2008.

**II. Guest Speakers**

**House Majority Leader Kumar Barve**

Delegate Barve told the Commission that he's been a member of the General Assembly for nineteen years since 1989 and Chair Nishida was one of his first supporters. He noted that this was at a time when there were so few people from non European and non African backgrounds in American government. He then talked about the historic inauguration of the first person of African descent to the Chief Executive's Office. That is a significant event on many different levels. Barack Obama is a highly competent, highly educated, very mature individual who is going to represent all Americans very well as our president. This is a genuinely historic event.

This inauguration reinforces that we all have a right to sit at the table and help govern our country and our state. He named the Asian American legislators in Maryland: Delegate Kumar

Barve (Indian American), Delegate David Valerrama (Filipino American)(Retired), Delegate Susan Lee (Chinese American), Delegate Kris Valderrama (Filipino American) and Delegate Saqib Ali (Pakistani American). He told the Commissioners that it is noble that they are here and participating, and he wants to continue to work together. Now we truly have an opportunity to turn this State and the nation into what the original intent was, and that is a country whose people are judged, as the Rev. Dr. King said, "On the content of their character, rather than on the color of their skin". He invited the Commission to e-mail him at [kumarbarve@gmail.com](mailto:kumarbarve@gmail.com). He encouraged the Commission to get more Asian Americans to apply for positions in government on boards, commissions, employment, etc.

Chair Nishida asked Delegate Barve to talk about the budget situation. Delegate Barve said that Maryland continues to have a AAA bond rating. Maryland has had this rating for fifty years. We have also recently been judged as having the best public school system in the United States. Last year taxes were raised, slots were passed and spending was reduced significantly. If these measures were not taken, we would be looking at a \$3.5 billion deficiency instead of a \$2 billion deficiency. Some very difficult political decisions were made last year and as a result, the fiscal situation while it is bad is not absolutely horrible. This year Maryland will have to solve the budget problems entirely through spending reductions.

### **Delegate Susan Lee**

Delegate Susan Lee thanked the Commission for inviting her to the meeting. This year has been a really inspirational year with the election of our new president. He is the life story of many of us, the son of an immigrant, worked his way through school, lived in Asia/Hawaii. He has transformed how we see American politics. Delegate Lee spoke on the economic crisis the country is facing, but informed the Commission that this does not mean we cannot move forward and overcome these challenges. We have overcome many obstacles in the history of our country and we'll do so this year, but we will have to work very closely with the president, federal officials in Congress, Governor and with the General Assembly.

Delegate Lee spoke about the \$2 billion deficiency facing Maryland this year, but it would have been worse if we did not pass revenue measures in the last few years. There will have to be some painful cuts, but not to K-12 public education, and we will try to keep the tuition freeze at the University of Maryland. Delegate Lee told the Commission that we also need to make sure that Maryland has more affordable and quality health care for all, move certain transportation projects forward, make sure that Maryland is more energy efficient, and maintain funding for stem cell research. Delegate Lee informed the Commission that there will probably be a series of bills that are going to try to single out and target immigrants and seek to trample on and curtail immigrant community civil rights. Delegate Lee told the Commission that the Asian American community needs to be visible. Delegate Lee solicited the help of the Commission to defeat any anti-immigrant bills that come this year. She informed the Commission that they are working with the Latino community, religious groups and civil rights groups to make sure the bills are defeated this year as well.

Delegate Lee thanked the Commissioners for their participation and leadership.

### **Jane Traynham, Maryland Department of Planning**

Ms. Jane Traynham informed the Commission that the 2010 Census will occur in April 2010, which leaves us about fifteen months. The Maryland Department of Planning will be working

very closely with the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives and the Secretary of State's office to implement the Governor's census outreach plan.

Ms. Trayham said that they would like to work with the Commissions, community groups, racial and ethnic groups, businesses, media, and non-profits interested in helping out and volunteering. The Census is using the slogan "It's In Our Hands". Every person should take active participation in this civic event. This is going to be a big challenge since by next year there should be approximately 5.8 million residents in Maryland. There have been a lot of changes since the last Census, such as development, foreclosures, and new arrivals. Ms. Traynham told the Commission that areas where new arrivals are that do not speak English is where the State will need their help. Ms. Traynham asked the Commission to help with translation of materials, assist in areas where there are limited English proficient populations and emphasize the importance of the Census.

Ms. Traynham said that the Census data is used by planners as well as local governments, state governments, businesses and community organizations to help them make decisions as to where resources should be going. There are a lot of programs in the State that use Census data to build roads and mass transit, provide services for seniors and children and make public health decisions. The data is also used to determine what federal funds Maryland will get to support the different programs. A lot of the federal funds are allocated based on formulas which use the Census data.

The Census determines the congressional districts based on the population. The Maryland Department of Planning (MDOP) has had a long standing relationship with the Census dating back to 1979, when MDP signed a Joint Statistical Agreement with the Census Bureau. The Census has already opened three offices in Maryland: Baltimore City, Largo and Frederick.

Ms. Traynham gave the Commission a couple of websites to visit for plans to help out the community: [www.census.gov/2010census](http://www.census.gov/2010census) and [www.mdp.state.md.us/msdc](http://www.mdp.state.md.us/msdc) (Maryland State Data Center). MDP is also developing a 2010 Census interactive map where you can see areas that are hard to enumerate. Ms. Traynham also spoke about the Complete Count Committees which will be comprised of volunteers from different avenues dedicated to get the word out about Census 2010. Language support programs are available, but she would like the help of the Commission with translations. She also asked the Commission to participate in the Complete Count Committees.

#### **Dr. Amitabha Das and Franklin Jackson Jackson, Jr., U.S. Census Bureau**

Dr. Amitabha Das, U.S. Census Bureau, spoke about the surveys done on behalf of CDC. They do a lot of data collection on behalf of CDC through surveys that help the community get better treatment, hospital information, sites, etc.

Franklin Jackson, Jr., U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, spoke to the Commission about 2010 Census. The Census strategy is to count everyone, count them once and count them in the right place. The Constitution requires a census every 10 years to determine the number of representatives to Congress for each state based on the population. The Census data is also used for projects and services for transportation, public works, economic development, public health, emergency preparedness, education, and senior services, among others. The first Census was in 1790. Census 2000 was the best Census ever in terms of response rate.

Mr. Jackson also informed the Commission about the confidentiality of the information provided to the Census. The Census cannot share personal information with ANYONE, not even with other federal or law enforcement agencies. The Census Bureau strips all identifying information and publishes only summary data.

Mr. Jackson told the Commission that the Census Bureau wants them to take ownership of the Census for the community. The Census Bureau wants to establish partnerships to help get the word out, by forming Complete Count Committees. These committees will help the Census figure out the best way to approach the community. Mr. Jackson asked the Commission to make sure the community is informed. He told the Commission that they should expect an advance letter, questionnaire and reminder postcard. If the questionnaire is not completed, you will receive a visit from a Census Enumerator.

He informed the Commission that on March 25, there will be a State Government Complete Count Committee kick-off. Mr. Jackson let the Commission know that the State loses \$1,000 a year, \$10,000 over 10 years, for every person not counted. Mr. Jackson asked the Commission to work with the Census. He spoke about the hard to reach populations which consist generally of Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans, Islamic, and Native Americans. They are trying to reach every group by providing brochures in various languages. They have materials in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Russian.

Dr. Das named a few more languages: Urdu, Bengali, Hindi, Malayalam, (South Asian languages). Dr. Das said that he has been traveling around to the South Asian communities in the United States. He asked the Commission to give him a call if they know of any events in these communities.

Mr. Jackson said that the Census has also started a program called Census in Schools. There is a website for teachers, students and parents. There are also lesson plans, newsletters, flyers and take home materials for students. School events are held to encourage participation in Census 2010.

There was a question about the confidentiality of the Census if you are an undocumented immigrant. Mr. Jackson responded by reassuring the Commission that the Census does not and will not share any personal information gathered from the Census. The information that the Census gets is turned into statistical data. The Census is only interested in making sure that everyone is counted.

Commissioner Beth Wong suggested that part of the Census presentation should more clearly address the concerns of undocumented immigrants and emphasize the fact that the Census does not care about their status. There are a lot of undocumented people who do not want to be counted.

Dr. Das informed the Commission that they are working with the State and local governments, in agencies like the Health Department where they see a lot of the undocumented population. Through these programs they encourage state and county government to promote Census and make everyone feel safe. That is how they can reach the hard to count population. They are also encouraging the counties to partner with local organizations.

Commissioner Sovan Tun spoke about his partnership with the Census in 2000 and he will be partnering again for Census 2010.

There was a discussion about the American Community Survey. This long form is used in the years between the Census for estimates and projections on the population and the economy. For the 2010 Census, the long form will not be used.

Commissioner Suresh Gupta asked about the Asian sub-groups. Chair Nishida requested that Dr. Das provide the Commission with a list of the ethnic sub-groups requested by Commissioner Gupta. Also, Chair Nishida requested a list of the 32 languages that Dr. Das spoke about in his presentation. Chair Nishida said that it would be helpful not only to have the job listings for management positions, but job descriptions and any items that might be translated in Asian languages that can be shared with the community. This helps the Commission better advertise and do the outreach.

Commissioner Wong asked if the Census had any incentives for organizations that partner with them. It was noted that the Census has no monetary incentives to offer.

Chair Nishida asked that the Community Development Committee take census outreach to the APA community as one of its major tasks. She spoke about events coming up such as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in May which present opportunities when the community gathers and the Census information can be shared.

### **III. Public Participation**

There were no public comments.

Executive Director David Lee spoke about the goal of the Commission and the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) for Census 2010. GOCI along with the Maryland Department of Planning and the Secretary of State's Office are the lead agencies in Maryland for the 2010 Census. The Department of Planning will be rolling out the whole Complete Count Committee and getting the word out for 2010 Census. In general it is our job as the Asian Pacific American Commission, Hispanic Commission and Middle Eastern Commission to reach out to our communities since they are among the hard to reach populations. Executive Director Lee stressed how important it is for everyone to be counted. He reiterated that for each additional person counted, that is \$1,000 dollars more per year in federal formula based funding. If we do not count that person, that person will not be counted for another ten years. That is \$10,000 per person that the State will be missing out on. It is really incumbent on us as the Governor's ambassadors to do our best to get involved with the Complete Count Committees.

Chair Nishida asked the Community Development Committee to come up with census outreach strategies for the Commission and for the APA community and report to the full Commission at the next meeting. Chair Nishida noted that every time we hear about health services, jobs, and infrastructure, that is driven by the Census count. We need to do a better job to make sure that the hard to count communities get counted so that they can get the services needed.

### **IV. Approval of November Minutes**

Commissioner Anis Ahmed moved for approval of the November 18, 2008 minutes. Commissioner Wong seconded the motion.

November 18, 2008 minutes were unanimously approved by the Commission.

### **V. Committee Reports**

Chair Nishida thanked everyone for attending the Joint Commission Assembly.

Commissioner Wong said that the Joint Commission Assembly was a good experience to network with the other Commissions. The Commission addressed a lot of outreach projects and will be coming up with some action plans for the coming year.

### **Economic Development – Commissioner Beth Wong**

The Economic Development Committee has not met for a couple of months. Commissioner Wong spoke about the upcoming Asian American Business Conference, for which the Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs is the lead organization. The Conference will be held on May 5, 2009 at the University of Maryland College Park.

One of the short term goals is to partner with the Secretary of State's Sister State Program.

Commissioner Wong solicited the help of the Commission for the Asian American Business Conference. If anyone can sponsor this event, please do so.

Executive Director Lee said this conference is an opportunity to look at different ways to grow your business in bad times. The conference will present state procurement opportunities, BRAC opportunities, private sector opportunities, a job fair, and a trade show. It's a great opportunity to open up some potential opportunities for the Asian American community. There will be more information about the conference on the Commission website. This is also where you can register. Executive Director Lee asked the Commission to publicize and solicit sponsorship for the conference.

### **Workforce Development – Commissioner Lily Qi**

In the absence of Chair Bruce Lee they picked a new Chair. They had dialogue and decided on some short and long term goals. One of them is to obtain more data from DBM about the State workforce, and to hold a job fair with the Economic Development Committee and other ethnic Commissions.

One of the long term goals is to partner with the University of Maryland. There are some areas that are in need of Asian Pacific Americans where the university has scholarships.

Commissioner Qi also noted that Montgomery College has a pilot program to train foreign licensed nurses to get credentials in this country and join the workforce in this country.

Chair Nishida said that this is the right time to start this initiative with the University of Maryland System.

### **Social Services – Commissioner Sovan Tun**

There is no new information since December. Commissioner Tun said that he has collected information from the Montgomery County Health Fair and American Health Initiative (AHO) Forum.

Commissioner Kitty Chin gave the announcement that on Saturday, January 24, 2009, Port Discovery will be celebrating Chinese New Year. There will be arts and crafts and it is not only for the children.

It was noted that the Commission will have a table at this event and Executive Administrator Agnes M. Smith will be staffing the table.

## **Community Development – Commissioner Anis Ahmed**

One of the short term goals for the Community Development Committee is the Census 2010. Commissioner Ahmed thanked Dr. Das and Mr. Jackson for their presentation. He also thanked Jane Traynham.

Chair Nishida said that the annual report is due to the Governor in June, and she would like to be able to demonstrate the pro-active projects that the Commission has accomplished in the last year and the Committees should consider this in their next meetings.

## **VI. New Business**

### **New Americans Initiative, Angela Lagdameo, Assistant to Chief of Staff, Governor's Office of Community Initiatives**

Special Assistant Angela Lagdameo told the Commission that today 27 members of the Maryland Council for New Americans were sworn in. The council has 45 members which include 13 ex-officio members, of which Chair Nishida is one, 2 Senate members, 2 Delegate members and gubernatorial appointee members representing civic and private sectors across the State. There is a strong faith based representation because so many of the congregants are impacting foreign born communities across the State. There is business representation as well as different representatives of non-profits. The Council has 4 working groups and need to produce a report to the Governor in 8 months, by September 3, 2009. The four working groups are: Workforce, Government Access, Citizenship, and Financial Services.

**Workforce:** Look at why so many of the foreign born population are underutilized in Maryland.  
**Government Access:** Evaluate State government and see how we can better serve our foreign born population.

**Citizenship:** There are 175,000 legal permanent residents in Maryland who are currently eligible for citizenship. We want to see how we can best help them along the path to citizenship.

**Financial Services:** See how we can allow the immigrant population to become financially independent.

Special Assistant Lagdameo asked the Commission to refer individuals who would like to serve on the working groups. Working group members do not have to be members of the Council. She also informed the Commission that the website would launch by the end of this week.

Executive Director Lee informed the Commission that the Governor's Lunar New Year Reception will be held on Tuesday, February 3, 2009 from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at the Government House. The guest list is being finalized.

A Draft Policy Regarding Requests for Co-Sponsorship was presented to the Commission. Commissioner Ahmed moved to accept this Policy Regarding Request for Co-Sponsorship. Commission Qi seconded the motion. The Policy Regarding Requests for Co-Sponsorship was unanimously accepted by Commission.

Chair Nishida spoke about the support letter for Commissioner Elizabeth Chung for Life and Discovery to get a grant. Commissioner Wong moved to approve the support letter for Commissioner Chung. The Commission unanimously approved the support letter. Executive Director Lee will draft the letter for Chair Nishida to sign.

Chair Nishida proposed that at the next Commission meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2009 that federal agencies are invited to give presentations with regards to federal workforce issues. Focus on federal workforce employment opportunities. Invite NIH, BRAC, Homeland Security, FDA, etc. Chair Nishida said that we need to look at agencies that the Asian American communities tend to be more active in such as research, health, etc.

Commissioner Ahmed suggested that the Commission recognize Executive Director Lee and Executive Administrator Smith. Chair Nishida said the Commission is very fortunate to have Executive Director Lee and Executive Administrator Smith support them not only in terms of organizing meetings, getting speakers, minutes and dinner, but also being the core for the Commission. Executive Director Lee let the Commission know that Executive Administrator Smith does this same work for four Commissions.

Executive Director Lee announced that the Department of Aging has made available a form advance medical directive called Five Wishes. This form is used to document what you want to happen to you in case you cannot make your own medical decisions. These forms are available in Korean, Hindi, Traditional Chinese and Vietnamese. Executive Director Lee informed the Commission that these forms are available at their request. He also asked them to spread the word to their communities.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.